Rashi on Lamentations
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Rashi on Lamentations

Chapter 1

Verse 1

How can it be that she sits in isolation. Yirmiyahu wrote the book of Lamentations. 1 Because Chapter 3 of Eichah begins with Yirmiyahu writing, "I am the man," one might mistakenly think that is the beginning of Yirmiyahu's writing, therefore Rashi states that he wrote the entire Book of Lamentations [=Eichah]. (Sifsei Chachomim) This is the scroll that Yehoyakim burned on the hearth. 2 See Yirmiyahu 36:23. It contained three 3 The three acrostics respond to the three tragedies that occurred: the physical exile of the Bnei Yisroel, the departure of the Shchinah and the loss of Eretz Yisroel. (Yalkut Me'am Lo'ez) alphabetical acrostics: 4 The alphabetical acrostic symbolizes the Bnei Yisroel's transgression of the Torah which was written with the letters of the Aleph Beis. (Sifsei Chachomim) "Oh how can it be that she sits [in isolation]," 5 Eichah 1:1. "How can it be [that God] has cast a gloom," 6 Ibid., 2:1. [and] "How dim can it be [that the golden glow] has paled." 7 Ibid., 4:1. He added to it, "I am the man...", 8 Ibid., 3:1. which contains three sets of alphabetical acrostics, as it is stated, "and many more words were added similar to those [of the original scroll]," 9 Yirmiyahu 36:32. three corresponding to three. 10 He also added Chapter 5. See Eichah Rabbah, Pesichta 28.
In isolation. Devoid of her inhabitants.
Teeming with people. The yud of רַבָּתִי is superfluous; 11 Palgei Mayim explains that the yud is not superfluous because the prophet is speaking in [first person singular] God's Name, saying, "How can it be that the city that 'I' made great and that 'I' made important, etc." [it means the same] as, רַבָּתִי עָם, that her people were many. 12 Alternatively, 'the city whose people were so wise' yet they were unable to prevent its destruction. (Eichah Rabbah); or, 'the city with great people.' (Ibn Ezra) There are many Aggadic midrashim, but I have come to explain the Scripture according to its literal meaning.
Has become like a widow. But not really a widow; rather, like a woman whose husband went abroad and he intends to return to her. 13 See Maseches Sanhedrin 104a.

Verse 2

She weeps bitterly. Weeping twice over the two destructions [of the Beis Hamikdosh]. 14 Rashi is explaining the reason for the double verb בכו תבכה. Alternatively, Yerusholayim weeps, and God, as it were, also weeps. (Yalkut Me'am Lo'ez)
In the night. For the Beis Hamikdosh was burned at night, as the master said, "at the time of evening they set it on fire." 15 Maseches Ta'anis 29a. Another explanation of "in the night," [is that] the night of the

weeping of the spies on the ninth of Av caused it to happen to them. 16 Ibid. Another explanation of "in the night," is that whoever weeps at night, the one who hears his voice weeps along with him. 17 Maseches Sanhedrin 104b.
Her tear on her cheek. Because she cries constantly. 18 Alternatively, her pain and suffering were so intense that she did not bother to wipe away her tears. (Yalkut Me'am Lo'ez)
All of her friends. Her lovers. 19 I.e., the prophets who predicted only her doom. (Palgei Mayim) Alternatively, her former allies who abandoned her in her time of crisis.

Verse 3

Yehudah was exiled. From her land.
Because of torment. Because of her affliction.
And excessive toil. With which the people of Kasdim burdened her. 20 Alternatively, Yehudah was exiled because of her idol worship [עבודה זרה]. (Rishon Letzion)
[Even] when she dwelt among the nations. And in the place where she was exiled and settled, she found no respite. 21 Because in the land where they were exiled, they were unable to partake of their food or their wine. (Lechem Dimah) Alternatively, although exile and torment serve as atonement for sin, the atonement was not complete and therefore there was no respite.
Between the barriers. It is elevated on either side and there is no place to flee.
The barriers. The boundaries of fields and vineyards. 22 From where there is no way to escape. (Palgei Mayim) The Midrash Aggadah [explains that it refers to the boundaries of time], i.e., between the seventeenth of Tammuz and the ninth of Av.

Verse 4

Festival visitors. People who went up [to Yerusholayim] for the festivals. 23 Alternatively, מועד refers to the Beis Hamikdosh, i.e., 'for lack of Beis Hamikdosh visitors.'
Grieve. An expression of grief, 24 Because the maidens were no longer able to go out and rejoice on the two most joyous days of the year, on the fifteenth of Menachem Av and on Yom Kippur. See Maseches Ta'anis, Mishnah 4:8. and there is no radical [=שִׂ but the 'gimel' alone.

Verse 5

Are at ease. Sit peacefully. 25 Alternatively, 'her enemies hunted her down.' (Yein Horekach); or 'her enemies made peace with each other.' Although they were fighting among themselves, they made peace and united against the Bnei Yisroel. See Rashi in Bamidbar 22:3 regarding Midyan and Mo'av. (Lechem Dimah)
Has brought her grief. Caused her to moan; it is an expression of sighing וְיָגוֹן.

Verse 6

Like harts who could find no pasture. Like harts who did not find pasture and have no strength to flee, 26 Alternatively, her nobles acted like harts who abandon their young when there is no pasture. Similarly, Bnei Yisroel's leaders did not chastise their brethren, but rather abandoned them. (Palgei Mayim) for their strength has been weakened by hunger.
Before the pursuer. Every רדף in Scripture is defective, 27 I.e., it is spelled without a ' vav '. but this one רוּדֵף is full, 28 I.e., it is

spelled with a vav. for they were totally pursued. Therefore the liturgic author composed, "I have been totally pursued, but the year of my redemption has not come." 29 Selichos for the second day of Aseres Yemei Teshuvah. [Also,] "and the year of my redemption has come," 30 Yeshayahu 63:4. is spelled defectively 31 .גְּאָלַי Without a vav. In our editions it is spelled full [גאולי]. However, the prophecy in Yeshayahuu 59:20 states, "A redeemer [גואל—spelled full] will come to Tzion," to indicate a "total redemption." (Eichah Rabbah 1:33)

Verse 7

Yerusholayim remembered. In her exile.
The days of her poverty. The days of her destruction, which brought her to poverty.
And lamenting. This וּמְרוּדֶיהָ is an expression of pain 32 Alternatively, 'and her rebellion [מרד] against God.' as in, "and I will wail וְיָרַדְתִּי upon the mountains," 33 Shoftim 11:37. [and as in,] "I lament אָרִיד as I speak and I moan." 34 Tehilim 55:3.
All her treasures. And [Yerusholayim] remembered all the good of her precious things 35 מחמדיה in this verse has a different meaning than in Verse 10 below, where it means 'Torah scrolls.' (Sifsei Chachomim) that were from days of old. 36 The beginning of the verse speaks of 'her poverty', therefore Rashi explains that 'her treasures' relates back to the 'days of old.' (Sifsei Chachomim)
Laughing derisively when she was curbed. They rejoiced over the cessation of her celebrating at her festivals, New Moons, and Sabbaths. But the Midrash Aggadah interprets it as a different expression, that they rested in exile on the Sabbath and festivals, and observed the seventh [i.e., Sabbatical] year. The gentiles ridiculed them and said, "Fools! In your land you did not observe [Sabbath and festivals,] and now in exile you keep it? In your land you did not observe [the Sabbatical year,] and now in exile you keep it?"

Verse 8

A wanderer. One who is in exile; an expression of moving and wandering, 37 See Bereishis 4:12. Also, see Rashi in verse 17 below. esmovement in O.F.
Her degradation. [Literally; her nakedness] Her shame.
Sorrowful. [Here נֶאֱנָחָה is] an expression in the passive past tense, sospira in O.F. [However, in] "They have heard how I groan," 38 Below, verse 21. it is a noun, sospirose in O.F.

Verse 9

Her defilement is at her hem. This is an expression of disgrace. Her menstrual blood is visible in the hems of her garments, i.e., her sins are conspicuous; she committed them flagrantly. 39 Alternatively, she committed her sins inconspicuously, hidden behind her hem. (Alshich)
She was not mindful of her end. When they would sin, they were not mindful of what their end would be. Therefore, she fell astonishingly. Her descent was astonishing, bringing about much bewilderment, for all were amazed that this happened to her, something that did not happen to any other city.

Verse 10

The oppressor extended his hand. Ammon and Mo'av. 40 Alternatively, Nevuchadnetzar. (Targum)

Over all her treasures. The Torah scrolls, which are spoken of as, "they are more desirable than gold." 41 Tehilim 19:11. All [the other nations] turned to plunder silver and gold, but they [i.e. Ammon and Mo'av] turned upon the Torah scrolls in order to burn them, because it is written in them, "an Ammonite [or a Mo'avite] shall not enter, etc." 42 Devarim 23:4. Concerning whom You commanded,
"Let them not enter your community. " These are referring to Ammon and Mo'av.

Verse 11

Verse 12

May this not happen to you. Such a calamity should not happen to all those who transgress the law. 43 עוברי דרך is translated thus, 'those who transgress [עוברי] the way [דרך] of the Torah.' The Sages said, that from here it is derived that to [publicly] complain about one's troubles has a basis in Scripture, [for Scripture states here,] "see what He did to me" [and] "Notice, see, etc." 44 Maseches Sanhedrin 104b.
That has been visited upon me. That was done to me.
When Adonoy brought grief. Upon me on the day He vented His wrath. This הוּגָה too is an expression of grief. 45 Alternatively, הגה is an expression of speech; the phrase meaning, 'that God had spoken [through His prophets].'

Verse 13

Crushing it. It [the fire] crushed it and broke it through punishment and suffering. Therefore, the ' nun ' is punctuated with a ' dagesh ', so that it is interpreted in the feminine singular, as in יַעֲשֶׂנָּה [=he will do it], יְכַרְסְמֶנָּה [=he will gnaw at it], יִרְעֶנָּה [=will graze upon it]; for עֶצֶם [=bone] is in the feminine gender, as [Scripture] states, "the dry bones [=46 ".הָעֲצָמוֹת הַיְבֵשׁוֹת Yechezkeil 37:4. It broke each one. Another explanation, וַיְרָדֶנָּה as in, "and he separated it into his hands." 47 Shoftim 14:9. He emptied the marrow, [i.e.,] he scraped and separated the marrow from within it. 48 Alternatively, 'and sent it [i.e., fire] down.'

Verse 14

The yoke of my iniquities is recorded in His hand. This word נִשְׂקַד has no likeness in Scripture, and in the Aramaic language of the Pesikta, they call a goad מַסְקָדָא, an ox goad. And I say that נִשְׂקַד is pointured in O.F., [meaning,] my transgressions were dotted, spotted, and marked in the hand of the Holy One, Blessed Is He, for a remembrance; their number and recompense have not been forgotten.
They have become interwoven. They became many braids, and came up to my neck, 49 צואר [neck] is symbolic of the Beis Hamikdosh; see Rashi in Bereishis 45:14. [as in] the language of the Mishnah, "We may (not) interlace the ropes of the bedsteads." 50 Maseches Mo'ed Katan, Mishnah 1:8.

Verse 15

Trampled. He trampled and trod, an expression of, "pave, pave סלּוּ the road." 51 Yeshayahuu 62:10.
He has proclaimed a gathering against me. A gathering of troops to come against me. 52 Alternatively, 'He has proclaimed to break [מועד] me.'
(Yein Horekach) And our Rabbis expounded what they expounded. Tammuz of

that year was a full month [=30 days], of the second year from their Exodus from Egypt. Therefore, the return of the spies occurred on the night of the ninth of Av, upon which their weeping was established for generations. 53 Maseches Ta'anis 29a. According to this explanation, מועד means 'a set time.'
[As with] a wine press, [God] has trodden. An expression of killing, as in, "I alone have trodden a winepress," 54 Yeshayahuu 63:3. as one treads upon grapes to extract their wine, so did He trample the women to extract their blood.

Verse 16

My eyes. I.e., my eye constantly sheds tears; the double expression indicates without interruption. 55 Alternatively, the double expression indicates the shedding of tears from both eyes. (Targum)

Verse 17

Tzion spread her arms. As in, "and he will stretch out his hand in its midst," 56 Yeshayahuu 25:11. like a person who moves his hands back and forth [showing] his pain with them. 57 Alternatively, 'Tzion spread her arms in prayer, but to no avail.' (Lechem Dimah) Another explanation: פֵּרְשָׂה עָיְוֹן is an expression of breaking, as in, "no one breaks פּוֹרֵשׁ bread for them," 58 Eichah 4:4. [and as in,] "they will not break [bread] for them in their bereavement to comfort them for the dead." 59 Yirmiyahu 16:7. So did Menachem classify it. And in the language of the Mishnah, "the broken piece of bread פְּרוּסָה is intact." 60 Maseches Berachos 37a. It means [that Tzion was] like a person in pain who clasps his hands and breaks them [from agony]. I found an addendum. Adonoy has commanded concerning Yaakov,
that his oppressors surround him. He commanded concerning Yaakov that his adversaries would surround him. Even when they were exiled to Bavel and Assyria, Sancheirev exiled their enemies, Ammon and Mo'av, and settled them beside them, and they taunted them, 61 I.e., even in exile they are surrounded by their enemies. as is stated in Maseches Kiddushin, 62 72a. that Homanya was in Bavel, entirely [occupied] by Ammonites.
Despicable. As an outcast, a disgrace. 63 Although Rashi above in verse 8 translated לְנִידָה as a wanderer, here it is spelled without a yud [לְנדָה], meaning derision. (Sifsei Chachomim)

Verse 18

Verse 19

I cried out to those who appeared to love me. To those who pretend to be [my] lovers. 64 I.e., the neighboring countries with the hope of forming an alliance.
But they deceived me. E.g., the children of Yishmael, who came out toward the exiles when the[ir] captors were leading them on the road nearby, and pretended that they were compassionate toward them. They brought for them various kinds of salty foods and inflated skin flasks. They thought that they [contained] wine, so they ate and became thirsty and wished to drink; but when they untied the flasks with their teeth, the air entered their intestines and they died. This is what Scripture says, "in the forest in Arabia shall you lodge, etc. Bring water for the thirsty, the inhabitants of the land of Tema greeted the wanderer with their bread." 65 Yeshayahuu 21:13-14.
To sustain their souls. In order that they should revive their souls.

Verse 20

Shriveled. They became shriveled, and there is [an expression] like this in the language of the Mishnah, "It fell into the fire and its intestines were scorched 66 ".וְנִצְטְרוּ Maseches Chulin 3:3.
Within, it is like death. Within the house was fear of demons, destructive beings, and angels of death; and from without, the enemy's sword was bereaving them.

Verse 21

For it is Your doing. You caused them to hate me when You separated me from [partaking of] their food and drink and from intermarrying with them. If I had intermarried with them, they would have had compassion upon me and upon their daughters' children.
Bring the day that You proclaimed. If only you had brought upon them the appointed day that You proclaimed upon me.
And let them resemble me. In distress.

Verse 22

Let all their evil come before You. May all their iniquities be remembered and counted before You. 67 And judge them accordingly.
And do to them. And do to them, as in, "[even a child] can be recognized by his deeds 68 ;"בְּמַעֲלָלָיו Mishlei 20:11. and [as in,] "according to the fruits of his deeds 69 ".מַעֲלָלָיו Yirmiyahu 32:19.

Chapter 2

Verse 1

How can it be that…cast a gloom. Bring darkness, 1 Alternatively, 'has raised up to the clouds.' (Ibn Ezra) as Scripture states, "the heavens had become darkened with clouds." 2 I Melochim 18:45.
From heaven to earth. After He lifted them up to heaven, He cast them to earth all at once, and not gradually; 3 Otherwise Scripture should have stated לארץ, instead of ארץ, the latter expression indicates that it was done in one instant. (Sifsei Chachomim) from a lofty roof to a deep pit.
His footstool. His footstool, referring to the Beis Hamikdosh. 4 See Targum in Tehilim 99:5.

Verse 2

[Every] residence of Yaakov. The houses of Yaakov, 5 Referring to the exile of the ten tribes; and 'the fortifications of the province of Yehudah' refers to the exile of the Dovidic dynasty, and thereby 'He desecrated the kingdom, etc.' an expression of a dwelling place. 6 From the root נוה; referring to the 480 learning institutions in Yerusholayim. (Eichah Rabbah 2:4)
Razing them to the ground. He lowered them to the ground.
He has desecrated the kingdom and its princes. These are the Israelites, who were called, "a kingdom of kohanim." 7 Shemos 19:6.
And its princes. Midrash Aggadah [states] that these are the heavenly princes 8 It cannot mean ordinary princes because they are included in the previously stated 'the kingdom.' (Sifsei Chachomim) [whose appointments] He changed. The one appointed over fire He appointed over water, and He changed all the appointees because there were among the

wicked of Yisroel those who knew the Ineffable Name of God, and they relied that they could invoke the heavenly princes to save them from fire, water, and sword. But now, when he would invoke the prince of fire by his name, he would reply, "This dominion is not within my power," and so all of them.

Verse 3

He withheld His right hand. He withdrew Himself as though withdrawing His right hand from waging war for his children. 9 His right hand is symbolic of strength and war. See Shemos 15:6.

Verse 4

He arched His bow. Because this is the manner of archers who are strong, to place their foot upon them [bows] when he bends them; therefore it is written as an expression of treading [=10 .דְּרִיכָה At first He merely arched his bow to scare them so that they repent.
He poured his fury like fire. The arrangement of the words is as follows: He poured His fury, which is like fire, for we do not find the "pouring" of fire except in conjunction with fury as it is written, "Pour Your fury upon the nations." 11 Tehilim 79:6.

Verse 5

He magnified in the community of Yehudah. He increased in the congregation of Yehudah.
Suffering and lamentation. Pain and wailing.
He magnified. The yud is vowelized with a small patach [= segol], which is an expression of increasing others, [as in,] "And the people increased וַיִּרְבּ and were very mighty," 12 Shemos 1:20. See Rashi there on ויטב. is vowelized [under the yud] with a chirik, which is an expression meaning that he himself increased. Similarly, every word whose radical ends with a hei, e.g., to turn פָּנָה, to go astray זָנָה, to weep בָּכָה, are vowelized in that manner when the hei is missing, when it speaks of itself it is vowelized with a chirik, e.g., "And Pharaoh turned." 13 Shemos 17:23. But when it speaks of others it is vowelized with a small patach [= segol], e.g., "and he turned [the foxes] tail to tail," 14 Shoftim 15:4. [and] "and Yehudah went into exile from his land," 15 II Melochim 25:21. Here, ויגל is vowelized with a chirik. [and] "and the king of Bavel exiled Yisroel into Assyria." 16 Ibid., 18:11.

Verse 6

He cut down. An expression of cutting, and similarly, "He will cast off like a vine," 17 Iyov 15:33. [and] "your steps were cut off." 18 Yirmiyahu 13:22.
Like a garden. As they cut off the vegetables of a garden.
His dwelling place. His abode. 19 The Kodesh Hakodoshim. (Palgei Mayim) It is written שָׂכּוֹ [to indicate] that He lightened 20 As in Bereishis 8:1, 'and the waters subsided' [וישכו]. His anger against His children with the destruction of His House. [So it is expounded] in the Midrash of Lamentations. 21 Eichah Rabbah 2:10.
He destroyed His place of Communion. The Holy of Holies, 22 Alternatively, the Beis Hamikdosh. (Palgei Mayim) where He would meet with His children, as it is stated, "I will set My meeting you there." 23 Shemos 25:22. See footnote for 1:4 above.
The king and the kohein. King Tzidkiyahu 24 See II Melochim 25:7. and Serayahu the Kohein Gadol. 25 See II Melochim 25:18-21. Rashi explains that the king and the kohein must be two individuals rather than a king

who is a kohein, because the kings who ruled during the period of the first Beis Hamikdosh were descendants of the non- kohein Dovidic dynasty. (Sifsei Chachomim)

Verse 7

[He] nullified. He rejected, 26 Alternatively, 'he burnt.' and similarly, "You rejected נֵאַרְתָּה the covenant of Your servant." 27 Tehilim 89:40.
Like that of a festival day. For they were making merry and singing with a loud voice in its midst. So did the enemies let out a cry of joy when it was destroyed.

Verse 8

Adonoy determined to destroy. It had been many days since this entered His mind, as it is stated, "For it has aroused My anger and My fury— this city—[from the day that they built it until this day], to remove it from My Presence." 28 Yirmiyahu 32:31.
He set the course. Of judgement, to be punished for our sins.
From destroying. From destroying.
The fence and the wall. A large wall and a small wall, a low wall opposite a high wall.

Verse 9

Her gates sank into the ground. The Midrash Aggadah [states], that because they [i.e., the gates] imparted honor to the Ark, as it is stated, "raise up your heads O gates," 29 Tehilim 24:9. therefore no one had any power over them, and they sank into the ground. [But] our Rabbis said that they were Dovid's handiwork, therefore, the enemies had no power over them. 30 Maseches Sotah 9a.
Without guidance. There is no one among them to give instructions.

Verse 10

They sit on the ground, etc. According to its apparent meaning. But the Midrash Aggadah [states] that Nevuchadnetzar sat them on the ground when Tzidkiyahu rebelled against him and transgressed his oath. He came and stationed himself in Dophnei 31 Nevuchadnetzar's headquarters was situated in Rivlah as indicated in Yirmiyahu 39:5. See Targum Yonoson Ben Uzieil in Bamidbar 34:11, who identifies Rivlah as Daphnei. However, the Gemara in Maseches Sanhedrin 96b identifies Rivlah as Antochya. of Ontochya, and sent for the Sanhedrin. They came toward him and he saw that they were men of imposing appearance. He sat them down in golden chairs and said to them, "recite your Torah for me chapter by chapter and translate it for me." When they reached the chapter dealing with vows, he said to them, "[What] if he wishes to retract [from his vow], can he retract?" They said to him, "Let him go to a sage and he will absolve him [of his vow]." He said to them, "If so, you [must have] absolved Tzidkiyahu of his oath." He [Nevuchadnetzar] commanded, and they pushed them down and sat them on the ground. 32 If they had sat down on their own accord, Scripture would have stated yushvu instead of yishvu and domu instead of yidmu. They then tied the hair of their heads to the horses' tails 33 As indicated by the end of the verse, 'they lower their heads to the ground.' and dragged them.

Verse 11

Shriveled. Regrezilerent [shriveled up] in O.F. Intestines— when a person casts them into a fire— shrivel up and burn.

Faint. Pasmer [faint] in O.F.

Verse 12

Verse 13

What testimony can I offer you, to what can I compare you. To say to you, "Why do you wonder about your destruction? Did that not happen to such and such a nation, just like [it happened] you?" 34 I.e., there is no other nation that suffered a calamity equal to yours.
To what can I liken you to console you. When trouble befalls a person, [people] say to him, "This also happened to so and so," as a consolation for him.

Verse 14

Falsehood and stupidity. Words that have no taste, in O.F. aplastrement.
And did not expose your transgressions. To reprove you directly about your way.
To bring you back from your waywardness. To straighten you out of your waywardness, an expression of "rebellious 35 ",שׁוּבָה Yirmiyahu 8;5. " backsliding 36 ",שׁוּבִים Ibid., 3:14. "and he went waywardly 37 ".שׁוּבָב Yeshayahuu 57:17.
And deception. They misled you away from Me.

Verse 15

They hiss. To blow with the mouth, [i.e., to whistle], sibler in O.F. It is customary for a person to do so upon seeing an important thing that was ruined and destroyed.
The perfection of beauty. All beauty was hers. 38 See Tehilim 50:2. The gematriya [numerical value] of ירושלים is equal to כלילת יופי. (Yalkut Me'am Lo'ez)

Verse 16

They opened their mouths wide concerning you. Why did Scripture place the pei 39 Means 'mouth'. before the ayin 40 Means 'eye'.? Because they [i.e., the prophets] were saying with their mouths what they did not see with their eyes.

Verse 17

He fulfilled his word. He completed His decree, as in, "let loose His hand and finish me off 41 ".וְיַבְצְעֵנִי Iyov 6:9.
As decreed in the days of old. That which is written in the Torah, "then I will increase your punishment sevenfold." 42 Vayikra 26:18.

Verse 18

Respite. Letting up, tresalement in O.F. [let up], as in, "and his heart grew faint 43 ".וַיָּפַג Bereishis 45:26.
The pupil of your eye. The black area of the eye which is called preanal [in O.F.].

Verse 19

Watches. Two parts of the night, for the night is divided into three parts, 44 See Rashi in Shemos 14:24. as our Rabbis stated in Maseches Berachos. 45 3a.
Faint. Pasmez in O.F. [faint].

Verse 20

Infants who were lovingly attended. Tender children, who are still being raised with their mothers' pampering. And our Rabbis expounded [that this phrase is] referring to Do'eg the son of Yoseif, 46 See Eichah Rabbah 1:51 which indicates that the infant was the son of Do'eg who had died, leaving a small child. However, according to an edification in the Talmudic text in Maseches Yoma 38b, Do'eg was the child's name, and Rashi apparently had this version. whose mother would measure him with [her] handbreadth every day, 47 The word טפחים [tipuchim] meaning care, can also be vowelized as tephuchim, meaning 'handbreadths.' to give gold to the Beis Hamikdosh according to how much he grew; 48 I.e., the weight he gained. and in the end she devoured him. 49 Maseches Yoma 38b.
When in the Sanctuary of God, was murdered a kohein and a prophet. The Holy Spirit answers them, "Was it proper for you to have murdered Zecharyah the son of Yehoyada," as it is written in Divrei Hayomim, 50 II Divrei Hayomim 24:20-21. that he reproved them when they came to prostrate themselves to Yo'ash, and they deified him. "And the Spirit [of God] enveloped Zecharyah the son of Yehoyada," 51 Ibid., 24:20. who was a kohein and a prophet, and they killed him in the courtyard. 52 Because he rebuked them for worshiping idols and he had prophesied the destruction of Yerusholayim.

Verse 21

Verse 22

You summon as if to a festive day. תִּקְרָא means] the same as קָרָאתָ; an expression in the present tense.
My neighbors. My evil neighbors, to gather about me to destroy. 53 Alternatively, 'my terrors.' (Ibn Ezra)
To whom I attended lovingly and reared, my enemy has annihilated. The children whom I pampered and reared, the enemy came and annihilated them.

Chapter 3

Verse 1

I am the man who has seen torment. Yirmiyahu lamented, saying, "I am the man who has seen torment," [i.e.,] who has seen torment more than all the prophets who prophesied concerning the destruction of the Beis Hamikdosh, for the Beis Hamikdosh was not destroyed in their days, but it was [destroyed] in my days.
By the rod of His fury. Of the One who chastises and smites, i.e., the Holy One, Blessed is He. 1 Alternatively, the enemy's rod, i.e., this phrase reverts to 'my enemy has annihilated,' and how, 'by the rod of his fury.' (Ibn Ezra)

Verse 2

Verse 3

At me alone He repeatedly. I alone am constantly smitten, for the entire repetition of His blows is upon me.

Verse 4

He rotted my flesh. As in, "to rotten לָבוּל wood." 2 Yeshayahuu 44:19. Another explanation: 'He has made my flesh and skin waste away,' as in, "And the earth will wear away תִּבְלֶה like a garment," 3 Ibid., 51:6. i.e., both young and old lay outdoors on the ground with neither pillow nor cushion, and their flesh wore out, when they were going into exile.

Verse 5

Encircling. He encompassed me.
Gall and bitter plants. As in, "gall and bitter fruit." 4 Devarim 29:17. The Midrash Aggadah [states] that רֹאשׁ, refers to Nevuchadnetzar in the exile of Yehoyachin; and תְּלָאָה [refers to] Nevuzaradan, who completed the blow in the days of Tzidkiyahu, and he wearied me. 5 According to this Midrash, תלאה is an expression similar to Shemos 18:8, where it means travail, hardship. (Sifsei Chachomim)

Verse 6

Verse 7

He fenced me in. He has made a wall opposite me [so that I] should be imprisoned. 6 Symbolic of Nevuchadnetzar's siege around Yerusholayim. (Lechem Dimah)
And I cannot go out. He stationed around me camps and troops of soldiers lying in wait for me.
He chained me heavily. He made heavy fetters for my feet so that I would not be able to walk, ferjes in O.F.

Verse 8

He represses my prayer. He shut the windows of the heavens before it.

Verse 9

He has made my paths crooked. If I wish to go out, I do not go out in the roads paved in a straight way, because of the enemies, but I go out on the crooked road.

Verse 10

He is a bear lying in wait for me. The Holy One, Blessed Is He, turned into a bear in wait for me. 7 Alternatively, bear refers to Nevuchadnetzar who lay in wait to attack the Bnei Yisroel who are symbolized by a lion. (Eichah Rabbah 3:4)

Verse 11

He spread thorns across my roads. An expression of thorns, [meaning that] He "has strewn" them with thorns, [i.e.,] He scattered thorns on my ways. 8 Alternatively, 'he forced me off my path.' (Ibn Ezra)

He made me hurdle them. An expression of spreading the legs. 9 Alternatively, ‘he wounded me.’ (Yalkut Me’am Lo’ez) One who passes on roads that are not cleared must widen his stride, and there is an example of this in the language of the Gemara: 10 Maseches Mo’ed Katan 10b. “The one who pruned 11 פָּשַׁח I.e., he separated the branches from the tree trunk. Here too, he had to separate his legs, i.e., take large strides, in order to avoid the thorns. a date palm.”

Verse 12

[He] positioned me as a target. He set me up opposite His arrows to shoot at me like a target, 12 By having to hurdle over the thorns I was forced to slow down, thereby becoming an easy target for my enemy. (Lechem Dimah) aseneil in O.F.

Verse 13

The arrows of His quiver. Arrows that are put into the quiver, called cuivre [in O.F.].

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

He ground. [Meaning] and He broke; and an example is, “My soul is crushed 13 ”,גָּרְסָה Tehilim 119:20. and similarly, “ground שֻׁגָּר when still fresh.” 14 Vayikra 2:14.
Pebblestones. Fine pebbles that are in the dust, for the exiles would knead their dough in the pits that they would dig in the ground, and the gravel would enter it, as the Holy One, Blessed Is He, said to Yechezkeil, “Make yourself implements for exile,” 15 Yechezkeil 12:3. in which to drink and in which to knead a small cake, so that they should learn and do likewise, as it is stated, “And Yechezkeil will be to you for a sign.” 16 Ibid., 24:24. But they ridiculed him and did not do so; at the end their teeth were broken.
He made me grovel. He turned me over in ashes like a vessel inverted on its mouth, adenter in O.F. [to throw flat on one’s face]. There is a similar [word] in the Mishnah, “Pishon the camel driver measured with a reversible measure.” 17 Maseches Yevamos 107b; he would invert the measure to his advantage, thereby shortchanging his customers.

Verse 17

Verse 18

I thought that my world was ruined. I said to myself because of my many troubles, “My world and my hope are gone.”

Verse 19

And my lament. Conpleint in O.F., [wailing].

Verse 20

When remembering. My soul [remembers] my affliction and my misery and is bowed down within me. This is the simple meaning according to the context of the verse. 18 I.e., תזכור is in the 'third person feminine,' and refers to his soul. But, the Midrash Aggadah explains זָכוֹר תִּזְכּוֹר, as, "I know that in the end You will remember what was done to me, 19 I.e., תזכור is in the 'second person masculine,' and refers to God. In the Hebrew language, the 'second person masculine' and the 'third person feminine' are identical. (Sifsei Chachomim) but my soul is bowed down within me waiting for the time of remembrance." On this [explanation] the liturgical author based, "With this I know that You have to remember, but my soul is bowed down within me until You remember."

Verse 21

Still I take this to heart. After my heart told me that my hope from God was gone, I will reply this to my heart, and I will continue to hope. What is it that I will reply to my heart?

Verse 22

By the grace Adonoy we have not perished. And the entire section until, "Why should [a living man] bemoan, etc." 20 Below, verse 39.
We have not perished. תָּמְנוּ is] the same as תַּמּוּ [ended]. 21 I.e., in 'the third person' meaning 'they have not perished.' But according to Rashi's second explanation, תמנו is in the 'second person' meaning 'we have not perished.' (Sifsei Chachomim) And some explain כִּי לֹא תָמְנוּ as in, "Will we ever stop תָּמְנוּ dying?" 22 Bamidbar 17:28. It is the kindnesses of God that we were not annihilated, that we have not perished because of our sins.

Verse 23

Each morning refreshed. Your kindnesses are renewed from day to day. Your faithfulness is immense. Your promise is great, and it is a great thing to believe in You that You will fulfill and keep what You promised us.

Verse 24

'Adonoy is my portion,' my soul declares. God is my portion; therefore it is proper that I should hope in Him.

Verse 25

Verse 26

It is good to hope in stillness. The vav of וְיָחִיל is superfluous just like the vav of "23 "וְאַיָּה וַעֲנָה Bereishis 36:24. [is superfluous in וְאַיָּה. It is good for man to hope, and remain silent and wait for God's salvation.

Verse 27

Verse 28

Let him stay alone. Whoever was befallen by mourning and trouble should sit alone and wait for good [to come].
And wait. An expression of waiting, as in, "If they say thus to us, 'Wait 24 "'!דמו I Shmuel 14:9. [in the incident dealing] with Yehonoson.
For He [God] has cast it upon him. For the Master of Decrees has put this decree upon him. 25 Alternatively, 'until He removes it,' i.e., until He removes the suffering from him. (Targum)

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

For God does not forsake forever. It is therefore good to wait.

Verse 32

Rather should he [man] cause grief. If man brings grief upon himself because of his sin[s], afterwards, He will yet have compassion in accordance with His immense grace. 26 Alternatively, 'He first afflicts, then pities according to His abundant kindness.' (Targum)
Cause grief... Cause grief. [Both words] are expressions of grief.

Verse 33

For He does not torment willfully nor cause men grief. From His heart and from His will; 27 Alternatively, if man does not humble himself from haughtiness, God will cause him grief. (Targum) rather the sin causes [the grief].

Verse 34

By crushing underfoot. This refers back to, "For He does not torment willfully by crushing underfoot, etc. nor through the miscarriage of one's justice, etc. nor by aggrieving a man in his dispute." All these, God did not condone. He did not approve of them, and it did not enter His thought to do so. 28 Alternatively, 'by crushing underfoot' refers to Nevuchadnetzar. (Midrash Eichah 3:30)

Verse 35

Verse 36

Does not condone. He does not approve that the heavenly tribunal should distort a person's dispute, as in, "What did you see רָאִיתָ that you did, etc." 29 Bereishis 20:10.

Verse 37

Whosoever issued a declaration that took effect, etc.

Verse 38

From the Almighty, etc. And if you attempt to say that this evil did not come to me from His hand, that it is coincidence that has befallen me; this is not so. For both bad occurrences and good occurrences, who has commanded and they came to pass, unless God ordained? And He commands neither bad nor good [to come]. But what should a living man bemoan? "A man for his sins." Every man should bemoan his sins, because they are what bring the evil upon him. ("They did not emanate from the Almighty," Rabbi Yochonon said, "From the day that the Holy One, Blessed Is He, said, 'See, I have placed before you today the life and the good, etc.,' 30 Devarim 30:15. neither evil nor good has come from His command." Rather the evil comes by itself to the one who commits evil, and the good to the one who does good.) Therefore, what should one bemoan? Why should a man be angry, if not about his sins?

Verse 39

Verse 40

Verse 41

Let us uplift our hearts together with our hands. When we lift up our hands to heaven let us also lift up our hearts with them to return, to bring back our hearts before the Omnipresent, Blessed is He. Another explanation: "With our hands." אֶל כַּפָּיִם means] to the clouds, to heaven, as [Scripture] states, "There is a cloud as small as a man's palm, rising." 31 I Melochim 18:44. And similarly, "Over the clouds He covers the rain." 32 Iyov 36:32. But the Midrash of our Rabbis [states], "Let us uplift our hearts" sincerely to the Holy One, Blessed Is He, like a person who washes his hands to clean them, casts from his hands all contamination, for "he who confesses and abandons will obtain mercy," but he who confesses but does not abandon [his sins] is like one who [is ritually impure who] immerses himself while holding a[n impure] creeping animal in his hand. 33 Until he casts it away he will not become ritually pure. See Rashi in Maseches Ta'anis 16a.

Verse 42

We have transgressed and rebelled. This is our way, because of the evil inclination.
And you have not forgiven. And for You, forgiveness is fitting, for so is Your way.

Verse 43

You have covered Yourself in wrath. You set up anger to be a barrier between You and us, and You pursued us with it.

Verse 44

Verse 45

Spittle, abominable. This is mucus; in the language of the Mishnah, "his phlegm and his mucus," 34 Maseches Bava Kama 3b. which is drawn out through the lungs and emitted through the throat.
You made us. This is in the present tense.

Verse 46

Verse 47

Terror then the pit. When we fled because of the terror, we fell into the pit. 35 See Yeshayahuu 24:17-18.
Ruin. An expression of desolation, as in, "ruin." 36 The last three words "as in 'ruin'" is omitted from Rashi's text. (Sifsei Chachomim)

Verse 48

Verse 49

[It will flow] without pause. Without change or cessation.

Verse 50

Verse 51

My eye has made me ugly, sorrowing over my soul, more than all the inhabitants of my city. Yirmiyahu was from a family of kohanim, and he said, "My eye, with its tears, sullied my face over my soul more than all the inhabitants of my city."
Made me ugly. And expression of sullying, as in, "and sullied my radiance with dirt." 37 Iyov 16:15.
More than all the inhabitants of my city. My family has more reason to cry than all the families of the city, for it was chosen for sanctity and for the service of the Holy One, Blessed Is He, over all Yisroel.

Verse 52

Verse 53

They bound my life to the dungeon. In prison.
They bound. They bound, as in, "the converging עוּתָּת of the sinews;" 38 Maseches Chulin 76a. "from within your kerchief 39 ",רְצָמָתֵךְ Shir Hashirim 4:1. estreinirent in O.F.
And cast stones upon me. On the mouth of the well [=dungeon]. That is what they did to Doniyeil; 40 See Donieil 6:18. and Yirmiyahu foresaw it with the Holy Spirit.
They bound my life to the dungeon. And although they confined my life in the dungeon from which I cannot ascend, they did not take this to heart [i.e., they were not satisfied]

Verse 54

The waters rose, etc. When a person is in water up to his waist, there still is hope, but if the water rises over his head, he then says, "My hope is gone," but I do not do this, rather "I called out, etc."
The waters rose. The nations of the world. 41 I.e., 'Water' is an allegory referring to the nations of the world.

Verse 55

Verse 56

Verse 57

You came near on the day I called to You. So were You accustomed in the earlier days to draw near to me on the days I called.

Verse 58

You fought, O God, the battles of my soul. In the days past.

Verse 59

You have seen, Adonoy, how aggrieved I am. In this distress, that my enemies wronged me.
Administer justice for me. As You have already done.

Verse 60

Verse 61

Verse 62

Verse 63

Verse 64

Verse 65

Break their hearts. A breaking of the heart, as [Scripture] says, "I will break you, O Yisroel," 42 Hosheia 11:8. [and as in,] "who broke your adversaries in your hand." 43 Bereishis 14:20. Another explanation of מְגִנַּת לֵב is 'stopping up of the heart,' trouble and sighing, which are like a shield against their heart. But he who explains it as an expression of grief is wrong, because there is no nun in this word, for the nun in יָגוֹן is not a radical, but it is like the nun of הָמוֹן from the [same] root as הָמוּ גוֹיִם, and like the nun of קָלוֹן from the root of נִקְלָה, and like the nun of עָיוֹן from the root of עִוָּה, and similarly the nun of

וּרוֹבָשׁ from the root of שֶׁבֶר. (and like the nun of וּמָמוֹן שְׁ and וּגָעוֹן שְׁ. It appears to me that this is the correct reading, and this is easy to understand.)
[Turn them] into fools. תַּאֲלָתָךְ is] an expression of [foolishness, 44 Alternatively, an expression of suffering, i.e., 'turn Your suffering, as it were, to them [our enemies].' Whenever the Bnei Yisroel suffer, God suffers, as it were, with them. Or תאלתך is an expression of a curse [אלה] i.e., 'bring upon them the curses [written in the Torah].' as in], "the princes of Tzo'an have become foolish 45 ".נוֹאֲלוּ Yeshayahuu 19:13.

Chapter 4

Verse 1

How can it be that the golden glow has paled. This elegy was pronounced over Yoshiyahu, 1 Who was killed in a battle with Pharaoh Necho. as it is stated in Divrei Hayomim, "Behold it is written in the Book of Lamentations," 2 II Divrei Hayomim 35:25. and with it he joined, in the midst of the elegy, the rest of the children of Tzion.
Paled. Dimmed, as in "3 "כֵּהָה Vayikra 13:6. which is rendered [by the Targum as] עֲמִיָא [=dimmed].
Golden. The appearance of a face that shines like gold.
Altered. Changes its appearance.
Jewel. A collection of beautiful gold articles used as ornaments is called כֶּתֶם.
Sacred gems. Children who shine like precious stones. But the Midrash Aggadah [states that "sacred gems are spilled refers to], every fourth-part [=רְבִיעִית of blood that Yoshiyahu shed with each arrow that they thrust into him, Yirmiyahu buried in its place [i.e., where it spilled]. Concerning it he called out, "sacred gems are spilled."

Verse 2

Who were evaluated in golden currency. Who were praised and valued like gold. Whoever saw them would say, "Look, the complexion of these is like the appearance of gold," and similarly, "it cannot be praised תְּסֻלָּה with the gold jewelry of Ophir," 4 Iyov 28:16. [and as in,] "with jewelry of fine gold, it cannot be praised 5 "תְּסֻלָּה Ibid. 28:19. [and as in,] "praise סֹלּוּ Him Who rides the heavens." 6 Tehilim 68:5. These are expressions of praise and value.
Like flasks of clay. Earthen pitchers in which they pour wine, e.g., wine flasks, [as in,] "And they will smash their jars 7 ".וְנִבְּלֵיהֶם Yirmiyahu 48:12. The scraps of broken metal utensils have some value, but the shards of broken earthenware have no value whatsoever. (Ramak)

Verse 3

Even the serpent. Even though it is cruel, it bares its breast. When it sees its offspring coming from afar, hungry, it uncovers its breasts from their sheath, for it has a cover over its breasts, and it takes them out so that its offspring should not see them covered up and turn away. Then they suckle their young.
Yet the daughters of my people have become brutal. They see their children crying for bread, and yet no one breaks [bread] for them; for their own lives come before their children's lives because of the hunger.

Verse 4

Verse 5

Those raised on richly colored brocade. On colored garments.
Those raised. An expression [similar to], "And he brought אֹמֶן up Hadassah." 8 Esther 2:7.
Dungheaps. Heaps of dung; they lie on the dunghills in the street.

Verse 6

[My people's] transgressions surpassed, etc. [The severity of] their punishment 9 Concerning S'dom, Scripture states, "her sin is extremely grave," in Bereishis 18:20. However, concerning Yehudah, Scripture states, "The iniquity of the house of Yisroel and Yehudah is extremely extremely great," in Yechezkeil 9:9. proves about them that their transgression is greater than that of Sodom. 10 S'dom's sins were committed before the Torah was given and are considered accidental [חטא]. However, these sins were committed after the Torah had been given and were considered to be premeditated [עון]. (Palgei Mayim)
Which was instantaneously overturned. The distress of Sodom was not prolonged; it was overturned as in one moment.
Untouched by [human] hands. I.e., the hands of the enemy; 11 Alternatively, 'who had no prophets' to lead them back to teshuvah; i.e., S'dom, unlike 'my people,' had no prophets to chastise them, therefore Bnei Yisroel's 'transgressions surpassed, etc.' (Targum) but it was overthrown through angels. 12 Referring to S'dom. There are also Aggadic Midrashim, but they do not fit the sequence of the verses.

Verse 7

Her Nazirites were more pristine. Her princes, like נֵזֶר and כֶּתֶר [=a crown]. But I say [it means] actual Nazirites, who had long hair and were very handsome, and the antecedent is "of my people." 13 Above Verse 6.
Those who appeared redder than pearls. Those whose appearance was ruddier than coral and whose forms were like sapphire; their complexions became darker than charcoal.

Verse 8

Than charcoal. This is charcoal.
[Their] bone[s]. An expression of appearance, as in, "like the appearance וּכְעֶצֶם of the heavens in purity," 14 Shemos 24:10. color in O.F.
Shrivelled. Shriveled and attached; and there is no similar [word in Scripture].

Verse 9

For they dripped with burst bellies, etc. The corpses [of those who died] because of hunger were swollen from the aroma of the fruits of the field. The enemies would roast meat on the grass outside the wall, and the aroma would go into those swollen from hunger, and their stomachs would split, and their feces would ooze. This is an uglier death than those slain by the sword.
With burst bellies. Being split; either by the swelling of hunger or by the stabbing of the sword is called piercing [=דְּקִירָה.
From [eating] the produce of the fields. Because of the roots and grass that they gathered and ate, their feces increased and they were loathsome.

Verse 10

Their food. For food, as in, "and he did not eat בָּרָה food with them," 15 II Shmuel 12:17. [and as in] "to serve Dovid a meal 16 ".לְהַבְרוֹת Ibid. 3:35.

Verse 11

Adonoy spent His wrath. Which burned in Him for many years. 17 God's fury is compared to a 'consuming fire' as in Eichah 2:3 above; also see Devorim 4:24. He now spent it when He avenged Himself upon them.

Verse 12

Verse 13

For the sins of her false prophets. [Because of the] false [prophets], this evil has befallen her. 18 Alternately, 'because of the sins committed against the prophets,' namely the murder of Zecharyah, this evil has befallen her. (Eichah Rabbah 4:16) Or 'because of the sins committed by her prophets and kohanim who burnt incense for idol worship, this evil has befallen her.' (Targum)

Verse 14

The blind slithered in the streets. When the blind would walk in the street, they would stagger, and their feet would slip on the blood of the slain, 19 Alternatively, 'they wandered through the streets blindly.' whom the wicked were slaying in its [Yerusholayim] midst.
Filthied with blood. They were so sullied with blood that those near them could not touch their clothes, and would therefore call out to them. 20 "Get away, you are contaminated, etc."

Verse 15

Get away. From us, you unclean ones, who are sullied with blood.
For they were obscene. An expression of foulness and filth, 21 Alternatively, 'they blasphemed.[נעוֹנאצוּ].' as in, "its crop מֵרְאָתוֹ with its feathers," 22 Vayikra 1:16. which is translated [by the Targum] as בְּאוּכְלֵיהּ. So did Menachem classify it.
And slithering. They slipped in blood..

Verse 16

In Adonoy's glaring anger He dispersed them. The angry face of the Holy One, Blessed Is He, divided and separated them among the nations, because they did not respect the presence of the kohanim when they were in their tranquility.

Verse 17

We persisted in longingly eyeing illusive reinforcements. When the evil befell us, our eyes were still looking forward to Pharaoh's army, concerning whom it is stated, "And the Egyptians, they help in vain and to no purpose," 23 Yeshayahu 30:7. for they would promise us aid but they would not come, as it is stated concerning them, "Behold, Pharaoh's army, which has come out to help [you], is returning to its land, to Egypt." 24 Yirmiyahu 37:7. We find in Midrash Kinos that they were coming in ships.

The Holy One, Blessed Is He, hinted to the sea and caused inflated flasks 25 The text in the Midrash is שלדותיהן, i.e., their skeletons. like human intestines to move about in the water. They said to each other, "These flasks are our forefathers, the men of Egypt who drowned in the sea on account of these Jews, and we are gong out to assist them?" They stopped and turned back.
Yearning. We waited.

Verse 18

They lurked behind our steps. Our enemies stalked our footsteps [and prevented us] from walking in our streets, as in, "but for one who had not lain in ambush 26 "צָדָה Shemos 21:13. [and as in,] "but you are stalking צָדָה my soul." 27 I Shmuel 34:12.

Verse 19

Verse 20

Adonoy's anointed. That is Yoshiyahu, as it is stated in Divrei Hayomim, "And Yirmiyahu lamented over Yoshiyahu." 28 II Divrei Hayomim 35:25. See Maseches Ta'anis 22b. Alternatively, 'Adonoy's appointed' refers to Tzidkiyahu king of Yehudah who was blinded and carried off to Bavel in chains by the people of Kasdim.
In their pitfalls. In the pits that they dug.

Verse 21

Rejoice in gladness city of Edom. Yirmiyahu prophesied about the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdosh which the Romans would destroy. 29 Alternatively, it refers to Edom who rejoiced at the downfall of Yerusholayim and rejoiced at the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdosh, as it says "Remember, Adonoy, for the offspring of Edom...who say 'Destroy! Destroy!' etc., in Tehilim 137:7.
Rejoice in gladness. For the time being, but ultimately, the cup of retribution will pass also over you, and you will become drunk from it.
[Till] you vomit. And you will throw up, as in, "and she emptied וַתְּעַר her pitcher." 30 Bereishis 24:20.

Verse 22

You have been fully chastised for your sins city of Tzion. You suffered for all your sins.
He will never exile you again. After the exile of Edom.

Chapter 5

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

We pay to drink our own water. Since we were afraid to draw water from the river because of the enemies, we bought [water] from them with money. 1 Alternatively, 'we are accustomed to drink from silver cups, and now we even have to pay to drink from wooden cups. (Yalkut Me'am Lo'ez)

Verse 5

We are hounded around our necks. Because of the yoke of hard labor.
We exhaust ourselves. To gather money and property.
But nothing remains for us. [Of] our toil in our hands, because the enemies would collect and seize everything for taxes, head taxes, and property taxes. 2 Alternatively, 'and we were given no rest [ולא הונח לנו].'

Verse 6

Toward Egypt we extended a hand [for assistance]. It is customary for a person who is falling and wishes to stand up to stretch out a hand to someone nearby to help him. Here too, we stretched out a hand to Egypt that they should help us. 3 Alternatively, Egypt gave us their hand[shake], i.e., an expression of making an oath, that they would assist us. (Ibn Ezra)
[Toward] Ashur. That they sate us with their bread.
We extended [a hand]. נָתַנּוּ is] the same as נָתַנּוּנוּ. The dagesh in the nun takes the place of the second nun, as in, "for all is from You, and from Your hand we have given נָתַנּוּ it to You," 4 I Divrei Hayomim 29:14. and as in, "and we will give נִתֵּנָה our daughters to you." 5 Bereishis 34:16.

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

We gain our bread at the risk of our lives. With our life in jeopardy. We were in danger when we would bring our food from the field because of the sword of the wilderness.

Verse 10

Inflamed. Became heated, as in, "for his mercies were aroused 6 ;"נִכְמְרוּ Ibid. 43:30. and in the language of the Gemara there are many instances, "a heating vessel כּוֹמֶר of grapes"; 7 Maseches Yevamos 97a. "the heating מִכְמָר of the flesh." 8 Maseches Pesachim 58a.
Burning hunger. As in, "and a burning זִיקְעָפוֹת wind," 9 Tehilim 11:6. an expression of burning.

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Encumbered with millstones. When the enemies led them away in neck irons, they would place on their shoulders millstones and burdens in order to tire them. 10 Alternatively, ‘youths were forced to grind wheat,’ a task which drains their strength. (Ibn Ezra) And similarly, “[and boys] staggered with beams,” [meaning that] their strength failed. The expression of staggering וּנְשָׁקָם applies to the weakening of strength, as is stated in Ezra, “And Yehudah said, ‘the strength of the bearer has failed,’” 11 Nechemyah 4:4. and similarly, “He has caused my strength to fail.” 12 Eichah 1:14.

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

For this our hearts ached, etc. Because of that which is delineated in the verse following, “Over Mount Tzion, which was devastated [and] foxes meandered over it.” 13 Below, verse 18. Our hearts ache only for the destruction of Mount Tzion, and nothing else. (Palgei Mayim)

Verse 18

Verse 19

Adonoy, You. We know that You will remain forever. And because that is so...

Verse 20

Why [then O Eternal] do You forget us. Have You not sworn to us Yourself that just as You exist, so does Your oath exist?

Verse 21

Verse 22

For although You may have considered us contemptible. Although we have sinned, [nonetheless] You should not have been angered as much as You have been.

Adonoy return us. Because he concludes with words of reproof, he had to repeat the preceding verse again, 14 In order to end on a note of consolation. and so did Yeshayahu, Trei Osor, and Koheles.